

R 051237Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9997
INFO IGAD COLLECTIVE
SECDEF WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
EIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
COMUSNAVCENT

UNCLAS ASMARA 000536

DEPT FOR AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: DEMOCRACY OUTREACH REACHES ENTHUSIASTIC ERITREANS

¶1. (U) Embassy Asmara hosted a successful election watch on the morning of November 5. Despite the 6:00am starting time, the event drew attendees eager to witness the U.S. election results televised live from three different networks. Open both by invitation and to the general public, the event drew a wide range of guests, from a high school teacher who brought her class of Eritrean students to Yemane Ghebreab, political chief of Eritrea's sole political party. Non-American attendees also participated in a mock election, favoring Senator Obama by a landslide. The election event capped a month-long public diplomacy effort to educate Eritreans on the U.S. elections and the democratic process. All six events drew maximum capacity.

¶2. (SBU) COMMENT: Eritrea's president stated in May that the country would not be ready for elections for three to four decades. The enthusiastic response to Embassy Asmara's election events, as demonstrated by the high turnout and audience participation in the Q&A sessions, reflects Eritreans' curiosity and longing for a democratic government. End Comment.

MCMULLEN